

227

Find that an ignorant girl like myself could put her fingers on the weak place in this clever paper, written by so eminent a man. 'And if it was so,' asked myself, 'if this lucky windfall had brought life to our planet, from whence did the other derive it & the life it bore? or the other, or the other, or whichever was the first to sustain living things? Obviously, the difficulty was removed only by a single step, and the poor man's ingenious theory went to prove no more than that life came to us at second hand. This is a round-about illustration, but I am coming to my point; which is,—

Never let children pin their faith to any infallible teacher. Accustom them to think, but father, & mother, & governess, know a great deal, & therefore claim a great deal of respect; but that any of the ~~three~~ may easily be wrong on any one point, & so too, may be their print-books. This is more important than we are apt to think. It's the nature of us to crave a pop. who will save us the trouble of thinking. We have popes many, political, social, literary, scientific, religious; & we to the excommunicate the pressure to think their own thoughts on their own lines. As for the children, their popes are household gods, mother & father above all. They are as ~~is~~ ^{natural} to them, & it is so good for them to reverence those in authority ~~as~~ ^{that} they

that it is not quite easy to say to the curious child,
"I don't know."

To keep the children's reverence, + at the same time, decline the impellent role, seems to reduce all we can do in this direction while the children are quite young. But, as they grow older, we see a glorious field before us. Really, there seems to no limit to this - we could do for the children what we only wish enough + good enough. They will be kept from presumptions easily! surely it seems a sin of presumption to let young people go forth to face the problems of life without an attempt to prepare them for the shocks to come.

In Bibl. reading, for example, our natural impulse is to keep the children in the dark. Their sweet young faith must not be disturbed by the thousand difficulties which have been raised on points ranging from the authenticity of a passage to the possibility of a revelation. This is criminal! Do you remember the man in the "Life of Bishop Harrington, who asks with his last breath, "Who did Cain marry? I hundred thousand such questions are in the air, + we can hardly keep the ears of our children closed against them, even whilst they are by our side. Neither can we deal with them one by one, nor imagine the next difficulty to turn up. But we can, from very early days,

It days give the children a guiding principle. If a fair & honest explanation of the difficulties offers well; if not; we must admit that it is a difficulty. & that we do not see the way out of it. also, that many good people find in every difficultie reason for doubting the truth of the Bible. This seems to us important. No argument has such weight with the young as the discovery that it is not ^{proper} persons & evil lives only who assail the scriptures with their doubts. To come across a righteous & minded man who casts the Bible aside while he still keeps hold to a large & vague faith in God, is terribly staggering to the immature mind.

But - if the child be prepared, if he have known these things from his youth up. Then, we think, the Christianity of youth will be in arms for the defense of the truth - & all the more so because it is attacked on many sides. The title of defender of the faith, could still be an honourable distinction in the eyes of young people. At the same time you will understand that we would not have them grow up jealous with a distrustful jealousy for the mere letter of the word. It is not on such points as the natural sleep for the creation of the world we would have them take interest.

But we hope to make them see that the truth of the Bible rests upon other ground altogether; & that all her assaults - the tireless brandishing of her obscurity; their seeming contradiction, slanders, the account of opposing

123.10.1863.3

12 impossible occurrence, - is but as weeping destruction against the pass of a cliff. For, in the Bible, we have God, in the Bible, we have Christ, & in the Bible, we have man; & it is ⁱⁿ ~~opposite~~ its revelations of these states that the Bible is impregnable.

We mean to take the children boldly through the Bible from Eden to Calvary, & thence after history - with some necessary omissions. Upon every page, we hope to make them see, with joy & awe, the magnificence & tenderness of Jehovah, the "all-forgiving gentleness" & the severity of Christ, the wilfulness & wickedness of man except as he is presented & followed by the Father's hand. With blessing from above, we hope not to leave the training of our children until their hearts cry out: "My Lord & my God!" And then the legion of doubts that beats men's minds will be to throw us over them mists of brotherly interest, seeing that it is through a way of bereavement - the Father brings home of his children home.

At the same time, we hope to arm them at these points, & that, not for their own sake alone.

"Socrates says that, & thus - ~~and~~ one comes near him in physics, or in metaphysics, or in historical acumen: you don't like to let your opinion against that great man reverend for his attainments, at the same time, a child can ask what the sage cannot answer; & a tyro may see how the arguments of a master don't hold water. Therefore, come up, with attack! which often answers better than the defense of that rich is, if its value above a good defense.

Robert Elmer, for instance, loses his head entirely on the assumption that "miracles don't happen." How it really should not be hard to fortify my children against such an attack as this. They must learn physical science, not only for the joy of reading the open secrets of nature, but that they may know + practice in the knowledge + how extremely little is open as yet to the most patient investigation. How soon we come to a blank wall in any field we follow: how we know nothing yet of fundamental truths - how, what is life? for instance, the life of a man or a plant - for protoplasm, which consists of this & that? Yes, but just this what together in due proportions to make life protoplasm, + - life is not ~~this~~. Not impossible, the next turn of the wheel will give us spending our strength in search for that Elixir - the hope of the past. Then, to the miracle of Resurrection. We shall ^{say} that it is impossible whilst science knows so little of the miracle of birth: laws of nature? How few of them we know! And who is to determine, therefore, what is, or is not a miracle? This ground at any rate, the most advanced (a sceptical) of our scientists has abandoned reached. They decline to say, that "miracles do not happen": - affirm only that the Bible miracles have not been proved to their satisfaction: a quite different matter, & by no means the last word on the subject - for those who have read much of the eclectic literature proper to the most advanced thinkers. Here are ^{miss}

14 / miracles of today which make the believers com., remembering
the old days, that scepticism superstition go hand
in hand.